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Dr. *Chauncy's*
S E R M O N

On the Death of

Mrs. *Foxcroft.*





The BLESSEDNESS *of the* DEAD
who die in the LORD.

A

S E R M O N

Preached the LORD's Day after the Funeral of

Mrs. ANNA FOXCROFT,

The amiable and pious Consort of the Reverend

Mr. *Thomas Foxcroft*,

Who died *October* 9th 1749, in the 53d
Year of her Age.

By *Charles Chauncy*, D. D.

One of the Pastors of the First Church in BOSTON.

Philip. i. 21. *For me to live is CHRIST, and to die
is Gain.*

B O S T O N,

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The Blessedness of the Dead who die in LORD.

REV. XIV. 13.

AND I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying to me, write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD from henceforth : Yea, saith the SPIRIT, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.

THE Manner in which these Words are introduced bespeaks a more than ordinary Attention. *I heard a Voice from Heaven.* i. e. from GOD out of Heaven: And it was a Voice distinctly articulated in its Sound, like the Voice at our SAVIOUR'S *Baptism* and *Transfiguration* ; a Voice that spake to the Apostle *John* in plain and intelligible Words, commanding him, not meerly to pronounce, but to *write*, the Dead in CHRIST blessed. For so it follows, *Saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD from henceforth.* Like Words of Support and Consolation to the Saints of the most High, both *living* and *dying*, are scarce to be met with any where in the Bible. The *Dead in CHRIST*, it is true, are frequently spoken of as *blessed* ;

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blest ; but, perhaps, never with so much Particularity, with such special Marks of Honour and Distinction. And yet, this is not all : For the *Divine SPIRIT* is himself introduced, expressly and solemnly testifying that they are thus blessed, and particularly specifying the *Instances* wherein they are so ; *Yea, saith the SPIRIT, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

In the Words, the three following Things are observable, not improper to employ our present Meditations.

I. *A Description of the Persons* here pronounced blessed ; *the Dead who die in the LORD.*

II. *A special Notification of the Time when they enter upon this Blessedness* ; signified in those Words, *from henceforth.*

III. *A Recital of the particular Instances* wherein they are blessed ; *that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

Accordingly, these are the Heads we shall distinctly illustrate, and then *apply* what may be offered in some suitable Reflections.

I. The *first* Thing observable in the Text is, *A Description of the Persons pronounced blessed.* And these are the *Dead* : Not the Dead without Discrimination, but *the Dead who die in the LORD.*

But, you will ask, Who are these ? Who are the Persons meant by *the Dead who die in the LORD*, concerning whom it is here declared, that they are *blest*. In answer whereto,

Some say, that the holy *Martyrs*, those who have suffered Death for the *Name* and *Sake* of the LORD
JESUS

JESUS CHRIST, are the Persons more especially intended. *Who die in the LORD*, i. e. for the LORD, for his Sake, in Defence of his Cause, and to bear Testimony to the Truth of his Gospel. So some expound the Phrase: In which Sense, it must be owned, it is sometimes taken in Scripture; as in *Eph. iv. 1. 1 Pet. i. 14.* (according to the Original) and in several other Places; which it is needless to turn you to. And, to be sure, those who suffer for Righteousness Sake, who die in the Cause of CHRIST, 'not counting their Lives dear to them', so that they may honour their Saviour, and the Truths pertaining to his Kingdom, are not to be excluded a Share in the *Blessedness* the Text speaks of: Though there does not appear sufficient Reason to determine, that these are the only Persons here intended.

Others therefore interpret the Words more generally, as including not only *Confessors* and *Martyrs*, but *all good Christians*. *Who die in the LORD*, i. e. in the Faith of the LORD JESUS, united to him, and interested in the Mercy of GOD through him. In this Sense they understand the Phrase: And with good Reason; for it seems to be of the same Import with those Phrases, *the Dead in CHRIST*, those that are *fallen asleep in JESUS*, which are undoubtedly made use of as descriptive of *sincere Christians* in common.

And we shall the more easily conceive of the Propriety of this Mode of Speech to point out *good Men*, if we call to mind, that *they* are not infrequently, in the Writings of the New-Testament, characterised from their *being in CHRIST*. Agreeable whereto is that Language, *2 Cor. iv. 17.* 'If any Man be *in CHRIST*, he is a new Creature'. And again, *Chap. xii. Ver. 2.* 'I knew a Man *in CHRIST*'.
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And yet again, *Philip*. iii. 8, 9. — ‘I count all Things but Loss, — that I may win CHRIST, and be found in him.’

There is indeed a *being in CHRIST* that is common to all that are Members of that visible Kingdom, of which he is Head and Lord; whether they are Christians in *Truth*, or in *Pretence* only. Hence the Apostle *Paul*, when mentioning the Churches of *Judea* (in which there were doubtless a Number of meer *nominal* Christians) uses that Style ‘which were in CHRIST’||. And our blessed Saviour expressly speaks of ‘Branches in him which bear no Fruit’†. And makes that Supposition, * ‘If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered : And Men gather them, and cast them into the Fire ; and they are burned’.

But this notwithstanding, there is a *being in CHRIST* that is *peculiar to good Men*, and certainly descriptive of their Character as such. And this indeed is that *being in CHRIST*, or *Union to him*, that is so much celebrated in Scripture, and set forth under such a Variety of strong and lively Resemblances. It is compared to the Union between *Husband* and *Wife*, which is so near and intimate that they are no longer *twain*, but *one Flesh*‡. — It is compared to the Union of a *Building*, in which the several Parts, being fitly framed, are so joined together as to constitute *one House*; of which House, CHRIST, in the Similitude, is the *Foundation*, or chief *Corner-Stone* **. — It is compared to the Union of the *Body* with the *Head*, in Consequence whereof it ‘maketh Increase, and groweth up into him, in all Things, which is the Head, even

|| Gal. i. 22. † John xv. 2. * Ibid. Ver. 6. ‡ Matth. xix. 5. ** 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6.

CHRIST' *||.— It is compared to the Union of a *Vine* and its *Branches* ; and the Analogy is so exact, that 'as the Branch cannot bear Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine ; so neither can *they*, except they abide *in him*' †. — It is compared to the Union between GOD and CHRIST ; and *they*, in the Comparison, are said to be *in him*, and *he in them*, in some Sense analogous to that in which *he is in the Father*, and the *Father in him* ||. — In a Word, *They* are, according to the Scriptures, *united to him*, and *so in him*, as to be *transformed into the same Image*, and to *partake of the same spiritual Nature* †. — They are *so in him* as to derive from him those Supplies of Grace, whereby they are made 'complete *in him*, who is the Head of all Principality and Power' |||. — Yea, they are *so in him* as to become interested in what he has done, and suffered, and is now doing in Heaven, at the Right Hand of GOD, on the Behalf of Sinners **.

And wherein could good Christians be better distinguished ? Their being thus spoken of as *in CHRIST* is an infallible Mark, discriminating them from all others.

And these now are the Persons intended by the *Dead that die in the LORD*. They are those, and only those, who, while alive, were *so united to CHRIST* as that they 'abode in him, and his Words in them'? They are those who were *so in CHRIST*, as that they derived such Influences from him whereby they were enabled to bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness, in a Conversation becoming the Gospel of CHRIST. Of all such, and of such only, it may be said, while they live, that they live *in CHRIST* ;

*|| Eph. iv. 15, 16. † Joh. xv. 4, 5. || Joh. xvii. 21, 22, 23. † 1 Cor. vi. 17. ||| Col. ii. 10. ** Eph. i. 3.

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and when they die, that they die *in CHRIST*. And *blessed*, says the *Voice from Heaven*, in my Text, *are the Dead that thus die in the LORD*. And this leads

II. To the *second* Thing observable in the Words, which is, *A special Notification of the Time, when the Dead in CHRIST shall enter upon this Blessedness*; signified by that Phrase, *from henceforth*. In the Original, it is *aparti*; which is an Expression that will admit of several Senses. Among others, it may well be construed in this, † which specifies the Time when the Dead in *CHRIST* commence blessed. ‘Blessed are the Dead, that die in the *LORD*, *from henceforth*’. As if it had been said, ‘*from that Time* they are blessed. They are no sooner Dead than they are blessed. They enter upon a State of Blessedness instantly upon their Death’. The Words are certainly capable of being thus understood; and this, probably is the very Sense in which they ought to be interpreted: To be sure, it is a Sense that falls in with the *Truth of Fact*, in respect of all the *Dead that die in the LORD*.

Their *Bodies*, it is true, ‘return to the Dust from whence they were taken’; but not so their *Spirits*. These ‘ascend up to *GOD* who gave them’: And this *immediately* upon their Death. *From henceforth*, we may say, they are blessed.

Their *Spirits* do not go to a *Place of Purgation*, in order to their being fitted for the *paradisaick* State; as is the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*: Neither do they *sleep* with their *Bodies*, till the general Resurrection; as is the Opinion of others, who, tho’ they profess a Regard to the Scriptures, yet

† Vid. *Lowman’s Paraphrase* in Loc. Note e.

explain

explain them so as to consist with their own private Notions : Much less still do they *perish* at Death, sinking into a State of *Non existence* ; as is the Presence of those, who are styled, in the sacred Language, ‘ wise Men after the Flesh ’.

If we may give Credit to the Revelations of *Scripture*, there is no Room for Doubt, whether the *Soul* survives the Funeral of the *Body* : Nor can it reasonably remain a Question, Whether those, *who die in the LORD*, do immediately pass into Glory ? The Apostle *Paul* certainly thought, that good Men were happy *instantly* upon their Death. For with him, in respect of all sincere Christians, ‘ to die is Gain ’ ; ‘ to be absent from the Body, is to be present with the LORD ’ ; and ‘ to depart hence, is to be with CHRIST, which is by far better than to abide in the Flesh ’. And our blessed SAVIOUR himself, in the *Parable* of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*, represents *Lazarus*, upon his dying, as *immediately* ‘ carried by the Angels into *Abraham’s Bosom* ’ ; by which he means a Place of ineffable Happiness. And it is observable, what he here says of *Lazarus* is exhibited as an *Example* of what will be the Case of all *who die in CHRIST* : The holy Angels of GOD will take into Custody their departing Spirits, and convoy them safe to some Place of Blessedness, in the future World.

And this *Scripture-Representation* of the Matter is far more agreeable to *true Philosophy*, than that which makes Death, either a *total Destruction* of our Being, or the bringing us into a State of *Insensibility*.

Death, considered as the *Destruction* of our rational and moral Powers, is an incredible Thing, if viewed in the Light of *Reason*. We have in Nature no Example of such Destruction. What we
call

call the *Destruction of material Beings* is, properly speaking, nothing more than a *Change of their Form*. And if, in respect of *unperceiving* Beings, there is no Destruction ; but only a *Change* in the *Mode* of their Existence : Why should it be thought, that a *total End* is put to *perceiving* Beings, much less to *intelligent moral* ones, upon such an Appearance as Death ? This cannot be argued from *Analogy* : For there is nothing similar to it, that we know of, in all the Revolutions of Nature. — It certainly looks more rational to conclude, that, in respect of such thinking moral Beings as Men are, a *Change* only is introduced by Death, as to the *Manner* of their Communication with this sensible and material World. — Besides, it does not reflect Honour on the infinitely benevolent Creator and Ruler of the World, to suppose him putting a Period, at Death, to the Existence of rational moral Beings ; especially, those among them, who, by a wise Improvement of their Powers, have enlarged their Capacities for Happiness. We can easily conceive GOD to be good, and as exercising Goodness, and the greatest Goodness upon the whole, when the Constitution of Things is such, as that, according to certain stated Laws, there shall be a *Change* in moral Beings, as to the *Manner* of their Existence, and the Exertment of their several Powers : But the Consistency between Goodness, in an infinitely benevolent Creator and Governour, and the *total perishing* of moral Beings ; especially such as have behaved well, does not so readily appear to the humane Mind. To be sure, it gives us, at best, but a low diminished Idea of the Benevolence of GOD, to view him as *destroying moral Agents*, capable of Happiness, and growing in their Capacity and Meetness for it, after so short and momentary an Existence as our's must be, if there is an End of it at Death. —

In like Manner, Death, considered as sinking Men into a *stupor*, and thereby rendring their thinking Powers uselefs and inactive, though it be only till the *Resurrection*, is a Notion that can no more be justified by *Reason*. What may have led to this Apprehension, and is indeed the only Thing that can, with any Colour, give Credit to it, is the ceasing of that *stated Order*, at Death, according to which the humane Mind has Communication, by Means of a wisely *organised Body*, with external Objects. But this is a Consideration more plausible than weighty, unless it could be made to appear, that the *Mind*, upon Failure of that *bodily Organization*, by Means of which it is *now* affected and moved, must be, if not destroyed, yet, at least, reduced to an *inactive* State ; becoming incapable of receiving other Ideas, or exercising it self in Contemplation on those it has already received : Which perhaps can never be done. It is allowed by all Inquirers into Nature, that the *present Method*, according to which the Mind receives Ideas, is an *arbitrary* Constitution : To be sure, it is not the only possible one ; for if it was, then no *Mind*, or *thinking Being*, could be impressed with Ideas, but in Conformity to this Law of Nature : Which, without all Doubt, is contrary to the Truth of Fact. And if the Mind *may* receive Ideas, and exert it self in making the proper Use of them, without being confined to the *present established Order of Nature*, it can never be proved, that, when this ceases to take place, as it will at *Death*, the Mind becomes *stupid*, *senseless* and *inactive*. It should seem far more reasonable to suppose, that *Death* only puts an End to that *constituted Method*, according to which the *Mind*, at present, receives Sensations from this material World ; introducing some *unknown Change* as to the *Manner* of its Communication with *that* it then goes into.

And

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And thus the Existence of the *Soul*, after *Death*, as a *living, active, thinking Being*, is a Supposition perfectly agreeable to the Principles of *Reason*, as well as the Doctrine of *Revelation*.

As to the *Place* where unimbodied Spirits exist, *Reason*, it must be owned, is wholly at a Loss; and *Revelation* speaks only in general Terms. *Reason* also is unable to declare the *Condition* of humane Souls in their *separate State*:— But we are relieved, under this Difficulty, by *Revelation*; which expressly affirms, in respect of all *who die in the LORD*, that they are *blessed*. The Apostle *John*, in my Text, *heard a Voice from Heaven*, declaring them *blessed*, and bidding him *write them blessed from henceforth*, i. e. from the very Moment of their Death. Yea, they are solemnly pronounced blessed by the SPIRIT of Truth; who also particularly says wherein they are so. And this brings me

III. To the *third Thing* observable in the Text, viz. *A Recital of the particular Instances, wherein the Dead who die in the LORD are blessed*. And these are two. 1. *They rest from their Labours*. 2. *Their Works do follow them*.

1. *They rest from their Labours*. i. e. from the Sorrows and Afflictions, the Crosses, Difficulties and Vexations, they were exposed to, and might be called to conflict with, while in this Vale of Tears.

Even good Christians, those who are *in CHRIST*, as being spiritually *united* to him, are liable, while in this World of Tryal and Discipline, to all those various Troubles to which Mankind are born, and which as naturally come upon them, ‘as the Sparks fly upwards’. There is, in this Respect, ‘one Event both to the Righteous and the Wicked: All Things

Things come alike to all : And no Man knoweth either Love or Hatred by all that is before him'.

There are, in general, two Sorts of Troubles, which those, who are *in* CHRIST, are exposed to, and often conflict with, in the present World, which they shall be set at Rest from the Moment they die, on Account whereof they are blessed ; the one *common to all Men*, the other *peculiar to good Christians*.

In *common with other Men*, they are exposed to numberless Diseases and Disasters, and all the Pain and Sorrow naturally consequent thereupon.—They may meet with Losses, and Crosses, and Disappointments ; and are capable of very uneasy Sensations herefrom.—They may suffer Hunger and Thirst, Nakedness and Distress ; and even the Want of all outward good Things.—They may be defamed, oppressed, and injuriously treated, both by Enemies and Friends.—They may be called to put on Mourning for the Death of their nearest Friends and Relations : ‘The Desire of their Eyes may be taken from them with a Stroke ;’ their ‘Children may be removed into Darkness :’ or, in many other Ways, their dearest Comforts may be imbittered to them.—In a Word, there is no Evil that can befall other Men, but it may befall them also ; and so as to impress their Minds with Grief and Pain, and endanger their indulging to Impatience and Discontent. But this is their *Blessedness*, that they shall not always labour under the Trial of such Evils as these. For at Death they *rest from their Labours* ; are instantly and eternally set free from all these Sorrows of a sinful and calamitous World. They shall no more meet with any cross Events ; they shall no more be disappointed ; they shall no more be afflicted and grieved : For being in the *State of the Dead*, they are in that State, concerning which

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which we read, *Rev.* xxi. 4. ‘And GOD shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes ; and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying ; neither shall there be any more Pain : for the former Things are passed away.’

But besides these Afflictions *common* to all Men, there are Labours and Distresses *peculiar to good Christians*, in respect whereof, those who are in CHRIST JESUS often suffer great Uneasiness, and go mourning all the Day long ; all which they shall rest from at Death.

It is no unusual Thing, even for very good Christians to call in Question the Safety of their spiritual State ; yea, many Times, they who ‘fear the LORD, and obey the Voice of his Servant, walk in Darkness, and see no Light’ ; by Means whereof, they are ‘subject to Bondage through Fear of Death,’ and what may be the Consequences of it beyond the Grave. But they are blessed, in that they shall rest from these Conflicts and spiritual Labours, if not before, yet certainly at Death. For they shall then know, to their intire Satisfaction, by being received to the Place assigned for the *Spirits of just Men make perfect*, that they are indeed the Friends of GOD, interested in the Purchases of the REDEEMER’S Blood, and Heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. They shall now see that all their former Suspicions, which gave them so much Anxiety, were groundless ; and shall never more entertain the least Fear whether GOD is their FATHER, and CHRIST their SAVIOUR ; but shall live in the assured Expectation of compleat Blessedness, when the ‘LORD JESUS shall appear a second Time without Sin unto Salvation.’

O what a glorious Rest is this ! What Heart can conceive the Pleasure, with which the separate Spirits of good Men shall be filled, when they come to know, beyond the Possibility of Mistake, that they are in Favour with the GOD of Heaven, and that they shall, in the Day of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, be owned as his Disciples, and bid, as such, to enter upon Possession of an everlasting Kingdom in Heaven ! — They will now exult with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. —

But the greatest Trouble of good Men arises from the Burden of Sin, they at present groan under. Notwithstanding all that has been wrought in them, and done for them, by the SPIRIT of GOD and *Holiness*, they have still a *carnal Part*, which opposes that in them which is *holy* and *spiritual*. And it occasions a great deal of Labour and Conflict. ‘The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh’: And so great is the Struggle between these two Principles, that they have often Reason to cry out with the holy Apostle *Paul*, ‘O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death’? But it shall not be always thus with those who are *in CHRIST JESUS*. Now they may complain of ‘Sin that dwelleth in them’: And after all their Endeavours, they will have Reason to lament their Frailties and Imperfections, their too frequent Inadvertencies, if not more heinous Offences. But Death will forever set them at Rest from all their Labours and Sorrows, occasioned by Sin. No sooner shall their Souls leave their Bodies than they shall become sinless. They shall no more, after Death, have Reason to lament, that ‘the good they would, they do not; and the Evil they would not, that they do.’ They shall no more have Occasion to bewail their having displeased GOD, or dishonoured CHRIST, or grieved the good SPIRIT

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of Grace. They shall no more reflect Blame on themselves for any Thing they have done that is amiss : For they are now in the Paradise of GOD without Spot or Wrinkle, perfectly conformed to the REDEEMER's Image.

O what a blessed Ingredient is this in the Rest of those *Dead who die in the LORD* ! How should the believing Prospect of such a Rest from Sin, even at present, ravish their Hearts with Joy ! and dispose them to long for their Dissolution, that they might no more displease their heavenly FATHER, that they might no more offend their compassionate REDEEMER ! Thanks be to GOD for JESUS CHRIST, through whom we have the Hope of putting off that Body of Sin and Death we are now clothed with, when we shall stand faultless before the Throne of his Glory with exceeding Joy.

And thus we see that *the Dead who die in the LORD are blessed*, as they rest from *their Labours*, i. e. their Troubles, Conflicts and Tryals, whether of an *outward* or *spiritual* Nature. But this Rest, you observe, is a *negative* Blessing : which though necessary to Happiness, yet is not all that is necessary : Nay, it is the smallest Ingredient in the Blessedness of the *Dead in CHRIST*. They not only rest from their Labours,

2. But, Secondly, *Their Works do follow them* : Not that they do so, according to the Strictness of the Letter ; for being *transient Acts*, no sooner done than gone, this is plainly impossible : But, by an easy Figure of Speech, *they* may be said to follow, or, as the Words may be rendered, *go along with them*. They do so in such Senses as these, which the Time will allow me but just to mention.

Their

Their Works do follow them. i. e. The *conscious Remembrance* that they once performed them. They do not, at Death, lose their *Power of Reflection*, but carry it with them into the Place of separate Spirits; where they are able to look back upon those Labours of Love, and Works of Faith, Humility, Patience, Submission, and other Virtues, they were enabled to exercise, while in this World of Tryal. And this Power of making themselves conscious to the having done these good Works, will be a never-failing Spring of Joy to them. Scarce any Thing will afford good Men, either in their separate State, or after the Re-union of their Souls to their Bodies, greater Pleasure than that which will result from the Reflection on those virtuous Acts, in their various Kinds, which they were disposed and enabled, by Divine Grace, to perform, in this World, to the Glory of CHRIST, and the Credit of his Religion.

Their Works do follow them. i. e. The *good Dispositions* which were confirmed and improved by the frequent Performance of them. The Habits of Virtue are capable of Improvement by virtuous Acts. The Repetition of *these* has a natural Aptitude, and, under the Influence of the SPIRIT of GOD, a powerful Tendency, both to invigorate their corresponding Dispositions, and give them a Facility in their Exertions. And good Men have accordingly improved their virtuous Habits, in a less or greater Degree, in Proportion to the Acts of Virtue, or those good Works, they have performed, in Obedience to the Will of GOD. And these Dispositions, with all their Improvements, they carry with them into the other World: And they are another Source of the Happiness they will there enjoy. At present, they reap no such Satisfaction as that which is the Fruit of their virtuous Dispositions suitably exercised: And the Connection between

tween Happiness and virtuous Exercises will much more take place, in the future State. The *Dead in CHRIST* will never cease, either in their unim-bodied State, or afterwards, employing themselves in Acts of Homage 'to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb,' or in Works of Love and Service to those they will then be associated with : And in these and such like Exercises, they will be eternally happy. —

Their Works do follow them. i. e, in fine, the *Reward* of them, freely bestowed for the Sake of *JESUS CHRIST*. Agreeable to which Interpretation of the Words is that of the Prophet, *Isai.* iii. 10. 'Say ye to the Righteous, it shall go well with him ; for they shall eat of the *Fruit* of their Doings.' And that of holy *David*, *Psalms* lviii. 11. — 'Verily, there is a *Reward* for the Righteous.'

This *Reward* they will enter upon, in *part*, at Death, and enjoy through the whole Time of the *intermediate* State. But it will not be *complete*, till the Day of the great and last Judgment. Then shall their *Souls* be again united to their *Bodies*, not as they were put into the Grave, but 'as fashioned like to the glorious Body of *JESUS CHRIST*': Then shall they be acquitted, upon a full Hearing of their Case, before the General Assembly of Angels and Men : And then shall they be pronounced *blessed*, and have 'Entrance ministred to them abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom prepared for them, from before the Foundation of the World'; in which Kingdom, they shall have placed on their Heads 'an immortal incorruptible Crown of Glory', and be treated as 'Kings and Priests to GOD and the FATHER for ever and ever.' — But the Blessedness of this *Reward* cannot be described. It surpasses all Language ; yea, all Conception. We have

have not, at present, fit Organs to let into the Mind adequate Ideas of it. For, 'as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered in the Heart of Man, the Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him.' 1 Cor. ii. 9.

I shall only add, as the *Dead who die in the LORD* are *blessed*, in that *their Works do follow them*, it is obvious to remark, that their Blessedness will be *various*, in *Degree*, both in their *separate State*, and after they are received to *Heaven*, according to the *Variety* there has been in *their Works*. Not that there is any *Merit* in the *Works*, even of those who are *in CHRIST*. Such a Supposition would carry with it a gross Absurdity, and basely reflect upon the *Mercy* of GOD, and the *Mediation* of JESUS CHRIST. But though there is no *Merit* in the *best Works* of the Saints, and the Reward promised to them is wholly a Matter of *Grace*, communicable only thro' the Hands of a *Mediator*, and on Account of his Performances and Sufferings, in this Capacity ; yet, it seems a Thing congruous in it self, that it should be a Reward *proportioned* to the *Difference* there is in the *Works* of good Christians. As *more* and *better* Works are done by some than others, it should seem fit that the Reward of some should be *greater* than that of others ; that GOD should distinguish those, whom he has enabled, by his Grace, to distinguish themselves, by their Zeal for his Honour, and their active Diligence in working the Works, which he sent them into the World to do : And there is no Reason to think, but that he will *thus* bestow the Rewards of the future World.

The *Application* is as follows.

I. As the *Dead who die in the LORD* are the Persons pronounced *blessed*, in my Text, we should
all

all be *concerned* that we may *thus die*. Die we must, sooner or later. ‘It is appointed to all Men once to die.’ And ‘what Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death’? — And shall we be unconcerned how it goes with us, when we come to die? That we may be ranked among the *blessed*, at the Day of our Death, is a Matter of the nearest and greatest Importance to us: And as those *only*, among *the Dead who die in the LORD*, are *blessed*, it should be our principal Concern and main Business, on the present Stage of Time, that we may thus die: In order whereto, we should make it our earnest and constant Care to get *into CHRIST*, while we live; for then, and then only, shall we be *in him* when we come to die.— There is such a Thing as a *spiritual Union to CHRIST*, a being *in him*, so as the Rest of the World are not; yea, so as to be interested in his Righteousness and Merits, and the Mercy of GOD to eternal Life on that Account. An *Union to CHRIST* by external Profession, and meer visible Membership, in that Kingdom of which he is the *Head*, is not sufficient for this. We may, notwithstanding such a *being in CHRIST*, be severed from him at Death, as withered Branches fit for burning; and at the final Judgment be doomed to a Departure from him, unto the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels. We must therefore take Care, that we be *in CHRIST* in an higher and more spiritual Sense. It is by *Faith*, not an empty notional Faith, but a Faith that is an inward living powerful Principle of Action, that we become *one with CHRIST*, *dwell in him*, and *live to him*, to the Purposes of another World. Let us in this Way, get *into CHRIST*: And if we are thus *in him* while we *live*, we may depend we shall be *in him* when we come to die: And *blessed*, for ever blessed shall we be, if we *die in the LORD*.

2. The Consideration, that those *who die in the LORD, do rest from their Labours*, affords strong Ground of Support and Consolation to *good Christians* under the *Sorrows and Troubles of Life*. These may be many, and great. — In this Way, it may seem good to the Wisdom of GOD to give Opportunity for the Tryal of your Graces, and to let ‘Patience have its perfect Work.’ But be not discouraged: The Time of your Redemption draweth near. It will not be long before you will arrive at the Place of the *Dead in CHRIST*, where you shall eternally rest from all your Labours and Sorrows. Your ‘Tears may endure for a Night; but Joy cometh in the Morning.’ The Time hastens, it hastens with a quick Pace, when all ‘Cryings shall flee away.’ O look forward, in the lively Exercise of Faith, to the Apartment assigned, in the Place of *separate Spirits*, for the *Dead who die in the LORD*, and ‘faint not in your Minds;’ neither repine at Providence. — What though you may be called to endure Hardships, and pass through a Variety of afflictive Tryals, so long as the Time is at Hand, when you shall be taken by the holy Angels of GOD, and carried to a World of eternal Rest from all your Griefs and Labours. Is not this enough to support your Spirits, and soften your Difficulties and Toils? — ‘Be ye patient therefore,’ ye who are *in CHRIST*, and *live to him*, ‘stablish your Hearts; for the coming of the LORD draweth nigh’: His coming to call you by *Death*; and then ‘shall all Tears be wiped away from your Eyes: neither shall you know Sorrow any more.’

3. What has been discoursed may be improved to reconcile *good Christians* to the *Thought of dying*, and render it *comfortable* to them. Your Bodies, it is true, will at Death, become senseless and inactive; they will be laid in the dark and silent Grave, and there

there they will dissolve, and gradually return to their original Dust : which are Considerations abhorrent to Nature, and apt to startle even the most *sanctified* in JESUS CHRIST. But to guard against undue Impressions from these natural Horrors of the Grave, you should, in the Exercise of Faith, turn your Thoughts to *those Spirits within you*, which will survive the Funeral of your *Bodies* ; ascending up, when they die, ‘ to GOD who gave them,’ to be made by him *immediately blessed*, in some Place, he has prepared, in the other World, for the ‘ Spirits of just Men.’ A most comforting Reflection this ! and should make the Thought of Death set easy on the Minds of good Men ; yea, it should render it pleasant and joyful to them : Especially, while they are in the further Exercise of Faith in a *living REDEEMER*, who will again ‘ stand upon this Earth,’ and by his almighty Voice speak Life even into their dead *Bodies*, however long they may have laid dead, and into whatever small Particles of Dust they may have been resolved. For this is that which we are certified of in the *Revelations* of GOD, that ‘ this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal, Immortality ; when shall be brought to pass that Saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory.’

4. *Rich Consolation* may be fetched, from the preceeding Discourse, for those who may be mourning the Decease of near and dear *Relatives*, whom they have Reason to believe *died in the LORD*. Such indeed, in a Sense, cannot be said to be *dead* : They are *alive* in respect of their *Spirits* ; and what is more, their *Spirits* are alive in a *State of Happiness* : for, as the Apostle *John* was ordered, by a *Voice from GOD out of Heaven*, to declare, and write, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD* : To which, the *Divine SPIRIT* is brought in subjoining his

his Testimony ; *Yea, saith the SPIRIT, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

A most comforting and supporting Consideration this ! There is enough in it, duly realised, to compose your Minds to Silence and Submission, upon the Death of the nearest and dearest Relative.

I doubt not, *your afflicted Pastor*, and *my Companion and Fellow-Labourer in the Kingdom and Patience of JESUS CHRIST*, has often, since the holy GOD took from him *the Desire of his Eyes*, quieted his Heart, by looking beyond the Grave, to the Paradise of GOD, and meditating on her, in his believing Hopes, as enjoying there perfect Rest from all her Labours and Conflicts, and reaping the blessed Reward of her Works of Righteousness, in *Joys unspeakable*, which shall increase and endure forever. It cannot be supposed, that, in this View of her, he so much as wishes her back again into this World of Sin and Sorrow. And though he may grieve, it is not *for her* ; but *for himself*, and *his dear Children*. And in this Respect, he is not to be blamed, if 'his Heart is troubled.' *Nature* leads to this, and *Religion* does not forbid it. *Abraham*, that Pattern of Faith and Submission, upon the Death of *Sarah*, 'went to mourn and weep for her.' And a greater than *Abraham*, even the blessed JESUS, did himself *weep* upon Occasion of the Death of *Lazarus*. And there is, in the present Case, just Cause of Grief :—The Excitements to the Sensations of Sorrow are strong and powerful.

It may renew the Grief of *my Fellow-Worker unto the Kingdom of GOD*, if I mention, in his Presence, those Things which adorned his deceased Consort, and made her amiable in the Sight of those who

were acquainted with her : Yet, he will ‘ forgive me this Wrong,’ if, out of Regard to GOD, whose she was, and whom she served, I endeavour some brief Delineation of her Character.

She was a Person endowed with desirable Qualities ; a good Understanding, a solid Judgment, and a well-turned Mind : Sober and grave, yet pleasant and chearful : cautious and reserved, yet, upon suitable Occasions, wisely free and open : meek and gentle, yet capable of Resentment, when proper and necessary ; though not hasty to be angry, not given to Wrath, never bitter, never revengeful, never clamorous and noisy : Candid, and ever inclined to speak well of others : Compassionate to the poor and afflicted, and not envying them who prosper in the World : Generous, yet frugal in her Expences : Humble in her Deportment, and adorning herself in modest Apparel : A Keeper at home, yet a Friend to all the good Offices of Neighbourhood and Acquaintance : Singularly *prudent* ; not prone to be rash in Conduct, not acting without Thought, and at Random ; but apt to forecast her Affairs, and guide them with Discretion.—And as she was formed to behave well in the several Relations of Life, few better filled them with the Duties proper to them. As a *Wife*, how engaging in her Carriage ! how faithful ! how dutiful ! As a *Mother*, how tender and affectionate ! how vigilant ! ‘ having her Children in Subjection with all Gravity.’ As *Mistress* in the Family, how prudent in her *Œconomy* ! how provident ! how diligent ! The *Wise Man’s* Description of the *virtuous Woman* is very much her’s, ‘ She openeth her Mouth with Wisdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindness. She looketh well to the Ways of her Household, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness. Her Children
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arise up, and call her blessed ; her Husband also, and he praiseth her.' *Prov.* xxxi. 26, 27, 28.

But her greatest Glory was her being a *Woman in CHRIST*, a real good Christian ; as we cannot but charitably believe and judge. Those acquainted with her, when young, speak of her as having then a serious Bent of Mind ; noted for her Sobriety, Modesty, and decent Christian Behaviour. And she, all along in Life, discovered an Abhorrence of Vice, in all its various Shapes and Kinds ; and expressed a becoming Regard to the Things of GOD and Religion. She was a daily diligent Reader of her Bible, and constant in her Retirements for Devotion : A Lover of the House, and public Worship of GOD ; taking Care to sanctify his *Day*, and devoutly attend on all his Institutions.—But CHRIST, above all, was the lovely Object of her Desire, and Faith, and Hope. Into his Hands she committed the great Affair of her Soul's Salvation : On his Righteousness and Merits she depended for Acceptance with GOD to eternal Life : His Image she was adorned with : And the Graces of his *Spirit* she lived in the daily Exercise of ; endeavouring in all Things to please and serve him.—

It was on Account of these, and such like Strokes, in her Character, that she lived so generally beloved, and died so generally lamented ; leaving behind her a ' Name better than precious Ointment.' I doubt not I have a Witness, in the Hearts of many of you, to the Truth of all that I have said concerning her. You, the Worshipers of GOD in this House, justly entertained an high Opinion of her : And I cannot but mention to your Honour, and the Imitation of the Churches, the *Respect* you so readily shewed to *her*, as well as *Sympathy* with your bereaved *Pastor*, in the handsome Provision you made

made, by your generous Subscription, for her decent Funeral.— But she is now gone, not out of Being, blessed be GOD, though out of our World. In her last Sickness, she was silent and submissive ; as, at other Times before, she had set a bright Example of Patience and Firmness of Mind under great Afflictions. On her Death-bed, she expressed her Desire to depart and be with CHRIST ; and her Hope, that for her to die, would be Gain. And we doubt not, she is gone to be with CHRIST, (to whom she lived) in the Place GOD has appointed for the Reception of unimbodyed Spirits.

And what a Spring of Joy is this to the surviving Relatives ! How thankful should they be, that they are not called to ‘mourn as those who have no Hope’ ? And how should they temper their Sorrow with the Thought, that their departed Friend, though ‘ absent from the Body, is present with the LORD ’ !

We heartily wish for them all the Supports of Divine Grace, the Comforts of the HOLY GHOST, and those Influences from above, under this ‘ Tryal of their Faith,’ whereby they may be enabled to behave so as that CHRIST may be glorified, their own Holiness promoted, and their future Crown of Glory made more bright and weighty.

We unite in our Supplications to the Throne of GOD particularly for the mourning *Husband*, that he may be helped to exhibit such a Temper and Conduct, upon this Occasion, as that there may be no Reason to apply to him the Words of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, ‘ Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak Hands. Thy Words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble Knees. But now it is come upon thee,

thee, and thou faintest ; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled' : But, on the contrary, that it may be said of him, he sets before his Flock a bright Pattern of Meekness and Humility, of Faith, Patience, Submission, and a steady Trust in GOD, and firm Reliance on his Perfections and Promises. And may he be quickened to go on in his LORD's Work, with greater Zeal, Vigour, Fidelity, and active Diligence. And in fine, may he, from his own Experience of the Divine Consolations, under this trying Providence, have Reason to exult with the holy Apostle *Paul*, and say, 'Blessed be GOD, even the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father of Mercies, and the GOD of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of GOD.'

We wish also, for the bereaved *Children*, the Grace of GOD whereby they may be disposed and enabled to be Followers of their departed *Mother*, wherein she followed CHRIST. And may you her *Sons* appear as 'beautiful Plants grown up in your Youth' : And you her *Daughters*, shine as 'Corner-Stones polished after the Similitude of a Palace.'

Our Prayer likewise for the mourning *Sisters* is, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST would say to them, for their Support and Comfort, as he did in the Days of his Flesh to the *Sisters* of dead *Lazarus*, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life : He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.'

And may it please a good and gracious GOD to sanctify this repeated Stroke of his Hand upon *this Church* of JESUS CHRIST. We have Reason to lament, and pray, with *David*, 'Help LORD, for the
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the Godly cease, and the faithful fail from among us.'—Let us not be insensible of our great Loss, in the Removal of so many of our *Brethren* and *Sisters* in CHRIST, by Death, from Time to Time, and especially of late. 'O LORD our GOD, by whom shall *Jacob* arise? for he is small'! — Let us make GOD our Hope; and direct our Prayer to his holy Dwelling-place, begging that he would mercifully look from thence, and be 'the Repairer of our Breaches': And instead of the *Parents*, may the *Children* rise up, and do worthily for GOD in their Day and Generation.

And may we all get *spiritual Good* by the Providence we are now lamenting.

And may the *Daughters in Zion*, in special, hear the Voice of GOD, speaking as it were particularly to them; and be quickened therefrom to live as those who must shortly die. Let your 'Behaviour be as becometh Godliness'. — 'Be sober, discreet, chaste, exemplary for all good Works.' And 'your Adorning, let it be the hidden Man of the Heart; even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit: which is, in the Sight of GOD, of great Price.'

5. In the last Place, As the *Works* of good Christians *do follow them* into the other World, let us all labour to *abound therein*. Our good *Deeds*, done in Faith and Love, from a Regard to CHRIST, and for the Glory of GOD, are the only Things we can carry with us into the coming State: And these, we may depend, will go along with us, and of the infinite *Mercy* of GOD, through the infinite *Worthiness* of his dear Son JESUS CHRIST, be rewarded beyond, not only our Deserts, but even our Imaginations. And the *more* and *better* our Works have

have been, the greater and more glorious will our Reward be.

Be encouraged therefore to do all the good you can in the World. Serve GOD, and your Generation, with all your Might. — Faithfully employ your Time, and wisely improve the Talents you have been intrusted with. — ‘And besides this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith, Virtue ; and to Virtue, Knowledge ; and to Knowledge, Temperance ; and to Temperance, Patience ; and to Patience, Godliness ? and to Godliness, Brotherly-kindness ; and to Brotherly-kindness, Charity.’ And look to it, that ‘these Things be in you and abound’ : For in Proportion to your *Improvements* in them *here*, will be your *Reward* in Heaven *hereafter*. ‘Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, Be ye stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD ; for as much as ye know, that your Labour shall not be in vain in the LORD.’

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